The SFAI Student Newspaper

SFAI eye

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The Presidential Election... at SFAI

An Opionion Piece in Response to the State of the Nation

Cera Deibel



Photo by Duy Ho, Courtesy of the SFAI Marketing Department.

On November 10, it was announced that Gordon Knox has been appointed as the President of SFAI after an extensive year-long search after the departure of former President Charles Desmarais.

Knox will begin his role as President on January 23rd, 2017, wherein he will be bringing his 25 years of experience in the art world, including as director of ASU Art Museum, Director of Global Initiatives at Stanford Humanities Lab, and Founding Director of Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Italy.

On November 8th, Donald Trump was elected to become President of the United States. He will be bringing no relevant experience to the White House.

Recently, I have been contemplating the recent presidential appointments in our nation and at our institution. It is an awful and amazing thing to face two presidential elections in one week and be disappointed (an understatement) with the first and apathetic about the other. I am speaking, of course, about the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the appointment of Gordon Knox as the President of SFAI. As a result, we have all been feeling the immeasurable fear, anger, and hopelessness that these events have caused and the uncertainty for the days ahead. I'm writing this as I sit in the library of our school - a place that allows us to be insulated from many of the perils and prejudices of the world around us. At the same time, it exists within and reinforces the oppressive structures that have led to the disparity we are grappling with now. Ultimately, though, our school allows us a space for critical discourse through art and language to think through these problems that we face. To reference the Toni Morrison quote that Hesse shared with us after the election, "This is precisely the time when artists go to work...we speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal." I, personally, have found difficulty in knowing how to react, and in which ways I should speak my own voice when there are so many others equally as worthy of being amplified. What can I say as a writer? What work needs to be done?

At this moment in our Institute's history, we are at infinite transitions. We have an opportunity to fight for and build our future within the scope of the school and the city. SFAI is about to welcome Gordon Knox as our new president, despite the opinion of some students that another candidate was better suited to the job. As a result of this decision, we have seen our peers express anger and frustration borne from the overwhelming feeling that our voices as students and faculty might be heard, but our concerns are not being acted upon by those with institutional power. While these feelings are completely valid and warranted, I fear they will be turned toward the incoming president and this will result in more difficult days ahead for our community. Knox was chosen based on the breadth of experience and knowledge he has in working within arts communities, and I, among others, believe that he has the ability to provide our school a chance to thrive in the future. He is coming here ready to work and ready to address the multitude of problems we have been facing, and has already been a presence on campus in important meetings with student leaders. Knox is certainly not exempt from criticism, and I strongly encourage the dialogue about the qualities and concerns he must learn to adopt as he enters our community. I hope he will be open to learning from and working with everyone to understand our unique needs as a community. I hope he knows just how hard he will have to work to regain the trust we as students and the faculty have lost for the administration, and I hope he's committed to the challenge of fostering a healthier relationship with us. We have a valuable opportunity now to build towards our Institution's future - and we have the choice to build it alongside the new president or in spite of him. Let's consider it carefully. On the national election, there is little I wish to dedicate - there are people far more articulate and thoughtful than me expressing their pain, anger, and fear over what the decision of half of American voters means for the future of our world. Here is what I will say: I urge everyone in our community to take this opportunity to actively listen to and learn from one another. The small bits of solace I have found the past few days are in constructive, thoughtful conversations I've had with my fellow peers. This is the time to care for ourselves and for eachother through the uncertainty. We must learn how we can be more inclusive, how this space can be a haven for the hurting, the oppressed, the marginalized.

Most importantly, do not be complacent. The roots of these problems and fears have existed long before this election and will continue to exist so long as we continue to acquiesce to them. While it is difficult and exhausting, we cannot ignore the very real consequences of these changes. We bear the weight of the culture that surrounds us, but it does not define us. It is our job to take it and forge it into a weapon to fight like hell towards the progress we believe in, towards a future where we are all safe and we are all valued. Recognize that there is a difference between protesting in the present and fighting for the future; both are valuable acts of resistance through which we express our collective voice. However, the fight for the future will be less dramatic, less visible, and will last for infinite days, months, and years to come. It will come in the form of a constant and difficult push forward and steps back, of everyday vigilance to the values that we share, of a continual acknowledgement that we can always do better for our fellows. Ultimately, though, the fight begins here, through ensuring that our community is safe for everyone, a shield from the worst of what has always existed and that is now coming to the forefront. So many of the members of our community have been fighting against it their whole lives, and it is time we join arms and fight forward alongside them. It is our duty now more than ever to protect those of us most affected by the impending future ahead.
Pay attention. ♦

Listen to the Voices That Have Tried so Hard to Reach You

Anonymous Student

1. All educational institutions are political by nature.

2. Students, faculty and staff can be positioned to subvert power structures or to enforce them.

3. The assumption that these spaces only become political when the marginalized, the underserved and the exploited speak up is as incorrect as it is dangerous.

4. An institution's politics are revealed in the silence, in the moments of superficial peace punctuated by the murmurs of those who wish to speak but have been stripped of a voice.

5. We have all felt the craters left by our mentors, our coworkers, our peers, our friends, the people who had been taking the journey with us and making it a little easier.

6. Justice is impossible without institutional memory and accountability.

7. To say you have not heard of unrest is to communicate the gravity of a situation.

8. To say you do not wish to hear is to give power back to the hands that have robbed and pushed out.

9. To hear but to not act is to become the hands that have robbed and pushed out.

Obituaries

Stevie Southard

Jake Hogg

Jake Hogg's life at the San Francisco Art Institute was cut short after suffering from administrative malnourishment, working just one year as our Resident Director (December 2015 - December 2016) and watching several of his close colleagues leave for similar reasons. Jake always made it a priority to put a social justice perspective at the forefront of his work, and made efforts like no other staff member to promote inclusivity and diversity on campus. Jake successfully initiated the first sober living option into housing while he was here, and also helped a great deal with things like Consent Week. Further, he approached his work through a restorative rather than punitive mindset, and passed many of these skills onto his Resident Advisors. Jake truly was a mentor, friend, ally, and leader in a way that greatly surpassed his position as RD. Jake will be pursuing other opportunities as a Resident Director elsewhere.

Jill Tolfa

Jill Tolfa was an integral part of the Student Affairs team, working as the Global Programs PDSO at SFAI for four years (November 2012 - October 2016) and receiving the Student Union Outstanding Staff Award, chosen by SFAI undergraduate students for outstanding commitment and relentless dedication to the student community. Jill's life at the San Francisco Art Institute was cut short after heart complications. This woman had one of the biggest hearts ever, and it grew bigger from the students she worked with, but in the months preceding her death this big heart of hers was squeezed a little too tight every day by her superiors until it burst. Jill's warmth radiated everywhere she was, it was nearly impossible not to feel safe and comfortable around her. Her reassuring voice and that little twinkle in her eye never failed to make someone feel better or more confident in themselves and their goals. The amount of international students being drawn to the institute over the past several years has grown tremendously. This specific growth in population did not happen "organically," it happened because of Jill's expertise and admirable, fierce commitment to making connections with people from around the globe.

Since May 2016 (the month in which Mark Campbell was appointed Vice president for Enrollment and Student Affairs) Gina Davis (Accessibilities Specialist), Eliza Dennis (Career & Professional practices Coordinator), and Anthony Molinar (Dean of Students) also left the SFAI Student Affairs office. ♦

Meet the Dean

Max Blue

In Conversation with Elizabeth Trayner

Elizibeth traynar comes to SFAI from Salem, Oregon, where she served as the Director of Housing and Community Life at Willamette University. She comes to SFAI from a varied background in higher education, as well as health & wellness, and a position at a women's center. An obvious question at the firefront of my mind was...

Why SFAI? What attracted you to the school and how do you see yourself as a good fit?
One of the things that attracted me to SFAI was the size of the school. I think a small school like this allows me to get to know students and better meet their individual needs unlike a large institution where I only have the opportunity to interact with a small portion of the student body. I have also been interested in working at an art school, as an artist myself. Additionally, San Francisco is a great city and my partner and I often find ourselves vacationing in the city so we're excited to make our home in such a culturally rich environment. We are now within driving distance of my in-laws once again - an added bonus.



How has the assimilation process been so far?
With all that is happening on campus right now it has been a bit of an adjustment for me as I try and determine the most important priorities to be addressing. I'm looking forward to seeing the documents being prepared for the incoming president by students, faculty, and trustees because I feel this will give me a better picture of the concerns coming from multiple constituents.

This is a tense time in our community, and it feels like the tipping point of something. I know you haven't been here more than a few weeks, but if you feel like you can speak to it, what are your thoughts on this?
It is definitely a tense time to join the community. However, I think this presents us with a great opportunity to work together to make SFAI a better place. We seem to be making some progress but we still have a long way to go. I think that everyone involved wants to make improvements, but each comes at it with different experiences and perspectives. Change can be difficult and I hope to do my part to make SFAI reach its full potential.

Now that you've had a little time to be here and test the climate of student affairs, what are your priorities?
I'm still figuring some of that out, but one of my initial priorities is to get to know students and other members of the campus community. I'm sad that I won't have the opportunity to work with Jake for very long because of his new position on the east coast. As we search for a new person to serve in this role it is important for me that we prioritize finding someone who operates with social justice as a core value that is demonstrated in their work and everyday life. Beyond that, I'm still formulating where my priorities will land based upon the documents from students, faculty, and trustees, my own conversations with community members, and areas where I can identify gaps or opportunities for improvement.

How do you intend to and see yourself fitting into the community as time goes on?
I hope that I will be seen as a resource and someone that students in particular can come to with their joys as well as their concerns.

Do you have any background in the arts?
I do! My bachelors and master's degrees are in music. My major instrument is my voice, I was on piano scholarship, and I also play the flute and a little guitar. Most recently I have been singing with the Willamette Master Chorus, an auditioned choir that draws talent from the Willamette Valley in Oregon. In high school I took art for 4 years and won our sketch book competition my senior year, and won "best in show" for a sculpture I created at a regional art show. Recently I bought some supplies so I could get back to a creative space. I can't imagine a world without the arts.

Any big plans for next semester?
I'll be using the remainder of the calendar year and the beginning of January to formulate my plans. ♦

Loss & The Photograph

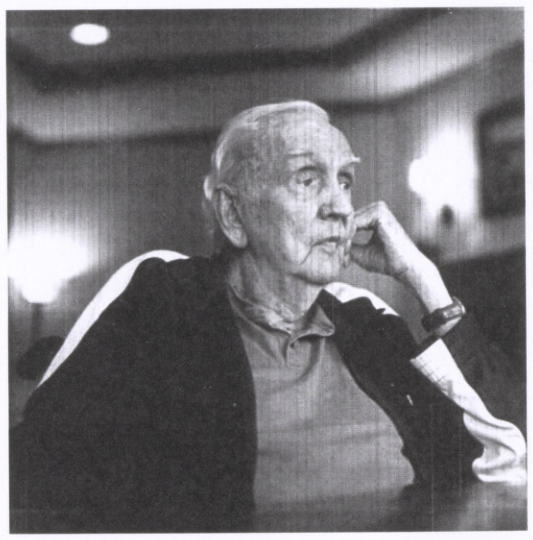
Ariella Robinson

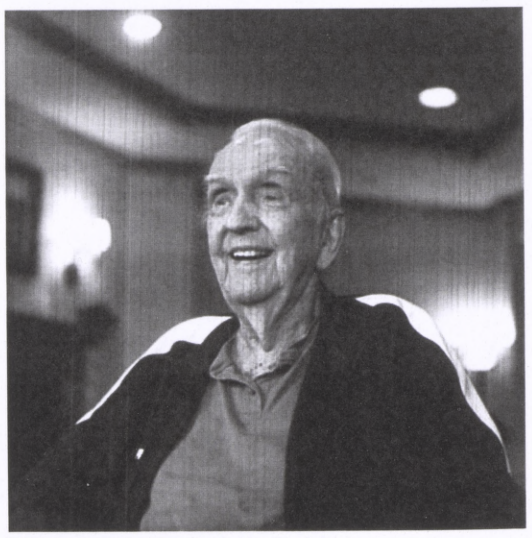
1,939 years ago, Pliny the Elder, a Roman administrative assistant to Emperor Vespasian wrote a comprehensive History of the Natural World . It's structure, comprised of 37 books organized into ten volumes, came to serve as a model for indexical research, scholarship, and encyclopedias. Its subject matter spanned from geography, and horticulture to aesthetics. Most notably, for me at least, in the 36th book Pliny tells us the story of the origin of painting. Kora of Sicyon, Daughter the Corinthian sculptor Butades, in declaration of fierce passion traces the shadow of her lover cast by a candle on the wall before he goes off to war.
This legend speaks to me in a myriad of ways. Firstly, the first person credited with image making is not just a woman, but a daughter. Additionally, while intended as a history of painting, the legend inadvertently describes the first photograph as well; the embodiment of a figure cast by light, immortalized on a surface with a simple gesture. But most poignantly, the first action of aesthetics, of image making, was an act of remembrance.

In August, I came home to Los Angeles for a week to see my grandfather. He was sick. And we knew he wasn't getting better. Out of fear, love, uncertainty, and under obligation as a photographer, I photographed him using my mother's old Rollieflex, a camera she had used when she was my age, also a photographer, also living in San Francisco.

But something happened when I was shooting that roll of film. Each time I engaged the shutter and tried to advance the film to the next exposure, I felt more and more resistance. I took a few more photographs until the lever was so stiff that the film would not move.

I developed the film, and the negatives were terribly damaged. The central gear inside the Rollieflex had corroded, and as the teeth turned inside the body of the camera it pulled the film in the wrong direction, leaving deep scratches through the length of the roll,





Photographs by Ariella Robinson

across every single frame. I was devastated. I called my mother, sobbing. This was all I had of my grandfather, and I was unsure if I would ever be able to photograph him again. I scanned the negatives into my computer in an attempt to digitally edit out the scratches, but there were too many. It was impossible.

In the weeks since, I've recognized my hysteria as grief. Grief for my beloved grandfather, and for the evanescence of time itself, and in accepting the inevitability of both these things, I've grown to love, and learned to grow from, the damaged negatives

The camera is body. A temporal object full of aggregate functions, limitless while bounded by materiality. Our gears wear down, with time they corrode, we malfunction. But the photograph, a medley of time, matter, and light, is a life. And in these tiny lives that we capture with a shutter, everything is irreversible. Our ailments cannot be edited out, but when our gears begin to disintegrate, we adapt, we grow, we come to terms, we learn to say good bye. The line Kora of Sicyon traced around the shadow of her lover was more than a painting, more than a photograph, the line occupied the lack, the line is the mnemonic device, engendering the space constructed by Kora's love, love from him, to her, from her, to him. The lines that traverse each frame of the film I shot that last time I saw my grandfather are a lineage. A lineage of bodies, of time, of memory. The camera, came from my mother, handed down to me, like my mother came from my grandfather, I came from my mother, and the photographs came from me. The inevitability of my cameras demise, is something we all share. It's unbearable, but beautiful.

How beautiful to be a line. To be connected to a line, to have someone whose line must be traced, photographed, remembered.

Through grieving, I've recognized the poetics beyond the tragedy of my cameras degradation. Like the light of Kora's departed lover, cast on the wall of her home, the light reflected off my grandfather's smile that now resides in damaged, silver celluloid film, is still here, while the camera wanes, negatives are scratched, and photographs tear, light is infinite. The light that emanates from all of us is infinite, one directional, it's destination unknown. ♦



Notes From Vienna

Alex Lilburn

October 22

Just began reading The Pale King by David Foster Wallace. Am absolutely mesmerized by his affective gestures, by his displacement of event and drama into internal pathological states. The book is fueled by constant tangential, oscillations between physical and internal. It's a veritable spiral, or a tornado, or a whirlpool, of characters seeing, saying, being in the absolute mundane and then internalizing, associating, synthesizing—a push & pull of so many points, pushing the infinite limit, of a matrix with unlimited boundaries, axes—the past, memory, and the associative tug of thought to irrelevancy, when a mind's unstimulated & unproductive. And the events of the book—the events of his language—drive with all their might against becoming drama—such as the closing paragraphs of Chapter 7, in which Sylvanshine is asked what he is thinking, and, without ever getting to his response, Wallace deviates into Sylvanshine's internal resistance to the question, beginning at his assertion of his right to privacy, then ping-ponging around to the anticipated refutation of the question itself and his worry regarding his duty as a newcomer to maintaining a professional environment and the necessary operational "personnel relations" and all the story-objects within the car, seemingly at random. Or the entirety of Chapter 6, in which Wallace spends several (seven) pages detailing the uncommunicated operations around the event and finally at the end plunging into a minute operation of the entire schematic itself; a simple few lines, instead spending pages with nothing said—only the past, memory, a character feeling one's own presence within a space.

My inquiry is this: how is this operation, method, or schema transferrable to film, a medium determined by the body-like thrust into future time, and never back again? It's something of a transferal of linguistic syntax: a use of synthesis between film-strips, between strips of time, within scenes or units. A filmmaker orders kinds of images, each with a distinct feel or function that either denotes or connotes (affect, to feeling or cognition, textural, relational, inter- or intra-). By placing images with images, each with a distinct feel or function that textural, either denotes or connotes (affect, to feeling or cognition, relational, inter- or intra-). By placing images with varying attitude or meaning- (value-?) systems side by side in time, one can build, as if with blocks, a kind of time-structure that is always shifting in form and attitude unto itself, a kind of labyrinth in which things are given but never determined; known but never spoken; concrete but never lasting. A film such as this would never conclude as our most generic dramatic films do; it would never seek to complete itself; the logic of its images would not seek resolution, conclusion, definition; the images would unfold infinitely like a flower in eternal spring.

The viewer would be like the minotaur, peering into corridors that may not even exist. It would borrow the premise of Eisenstein's attitude toward "collisions" but open it up into a myriad of splice-kinds, each splice given its own attitude toward the splice itself, the preceding and following images, the entirety of the film, and the relationship between all these things in all possible combinations; such a film would place the image (the now-image) at the center of attention, at the center of a vortex whose outward limits are the other images in the precession, caught in an orbit-like tangle of generation, recession, redemption, much like a de-centered atom or solar system, the various bodies dancing around one another, caught by random gravitational pulls and sent forth in random and meaningless directions, forming deictic patterns of absurd beauty.

October 24

The deictic function (of poetry), or deixis, dictation that enunciation of a word or image serves purely its own enunciation; its purpose is to be, to be spoken, written, to come into existence. The principle of on-location writing dictates that one not write the nuances of a given scene before the moment of being with the camera on location; in this way, the filmmaker integrates the given circumstances of the actual setting and moment into the structure of the image.

October 28

I unfocus my eyes and see the room as a whole, the screen as the object above the numerous, dozens of Viennese gathered to see; this is film. ♦

SFAI Tax Return Financial Data:

Fiscal Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Student Enrollment	1302	1323	1350

*

Total Revenue	$ 20,909,379	$ 29,467,391	$ 30,279,768
Tuition and Fees	$ 23,908,264	$ 25,166,248	$ 27,129,445
Less College Funded-Scholarships*	$ (6,716,128)		
Contributions	$ 940,689	$ 969,881	$ 1,099,601
Housing	$ 1,478,515	$ 1,529,421	$ 1,578,110
Other	$ 617,914	$ 344,808	$ 373,715
Investment Income	$ 680,125	$ 1,457,033	$ 98,897

Percentage Changes	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	2012 to 2014***
Total Revenue (Increase)		2.8%	
Tuition (Increase)	5.3%	7.8%	13.5%
Contribution (Increase)	3.1%	13.4%	16.9%
Housing Cost (Increase)	3.4%	3.2%	6.7%
"Other" Revenue (Decrease)	-44.2%	8.4%	-39.5%
Investment Income (Decrease)	114.2%	-93.2%	-85.5%

Total Expenses	$ 19,192,420	$ 27,413,133	$ 29,131,287
Instructional	$ 5,549,401	$ 6,464,794	$ 6,826,809
Community Programs	$ 380,147	$ 396,014	$ 374,046
Public Programs	$ 263,821	$ 482,168	$ 609,354
Academic Support	$ 1,372,235	$ 951,304	$ 837,675
Enrollment Services	$ 2,210,213	$ 2,223,908	$ 2,393,074
Institutional Support	$ 3,648,513	$ 3,402,718	$ 3,701,212
Facilities	$ 2,153,233	$ 2,251,336	$ 2,567,675
Development and Communication	$ 1,445,346	$ 608,197	$ 534,538
Marketing		$ 1,062,639	$ 1,321,737
Housing	$ 1,321,952	$ 1,394,982	$ 1,446,655
Depreciation Expenses	$ 847,559	$ 887,089	$ 874,399
College Funded-Scholarships**		$ 7,287,984	$ 7,644,113

Total Expenses (Increase)		6.3%	
Instructional (Increase)	16.5%	5.6%	23.0%
Community Programs (Decrease)	4.2%	-5.5%	-1.6%
Public Programs (Increase)	82.8%	26.4%	131.0%
Academic Support (Decrease)	-30.7%	-11.9%	-39.0%
Enrollment Services (Increase)	0.6%	7.6%	8.3%
Institutional Support (Increase)	-6.7%	8.8%	1.4%
Facilities (Increase)	4.6%	14.1%	19.2%
Development and Communication (Decrease)	-57.9%	-12.1%	-63.0%
Marketing (Increase)		24.4%	
Housing (Increase)	5.5%	3.7%	9.4%
Depreciation	4.7%	-1.4%	3.2%
Scholarship (Increase)		4.9%	

Salaries - Administrative "Officers"			
COO	$ 210,678	$ 223,303	$ 233,374
VP Enrollment	$ 138,781	$ 150,701	$ 148,346
VP Development	$ 132,761	$ 144,606	$ 153,644
Dean VP Academic Affairs		$ 68,519	$ 150,000
Director of Marketing		$ 111,877	$ 116,657
VP Exhibitions, Public		$ 55,607	$ 125,000
Controller	$ 126,768		$ 139,338
Assistant VP of Technology			$ 133,163
President	$ 268,128	$ 303,130	
Total Reported Highest Salaries	$ 877,116	$ 1,057,743	$ 1,199,522

Raises - Administrative "Officers"			
COO	6.0%	4.5%	10.8%
VP Enrollment	8.6%	-1.6%	6.9%
VP Development	8.9%	6.3%	15.7%
Dean VP Academic Affairs		118.9%	118.9%
Director of Marketing		4.3%	4.3%
VP Exhibitions, Public		124.8%	124.8%
Controller			9.9%
Assistant VP of Technology			
President	13.1%		13.1%
Total Reported Highest Salaries	20.6%	13.4%	36.8%

*These figures combine total enrollment between two semesters, most students are counted twice. **In 2013 scholarships were moved from the revenue to expense category. ***Two-year span*

SFA EYE expresses our deepest condolences to those affected, in any capacity, by the events of the Ghost Ship fire.



A Message to My Dear Friends: Left, Right, and Center by Eric Carson

Letter from the Editor

Max Blue

I hope you have enjoyed the second edition of the post-revival Eye. I would like to air a few personal feelings, but do not really have much to say.

These are trying times. On campus and off campus. In many ways the war has come into our homes. On campus and off campus. Going into the holidays, I encourage everyone to give themselves the gift of mental health. For those of us who will be seeing family and/or loved ones, this is a time to renew the bonds that we have and cherish, to love ourselves, and one another more than ever. I have faith that we will start off the new year and next semester on the right foot, with the right mindset. That goes for every member of the community.

Thank you for lending your attention not so much to the Eye, but to the SFAI community throughout this (particularly) difficult semester, politically on both the national scale and the institutional one.

While this is a time of uncertainty and disconcert, it is, and must be, a time of change, a change that only we, as one community, globally and here on campus, are capable of realizing.

Stick together.

Sincerely, and with love to you all,

Max Blue, Editor-in-Chief

The Eye Staff

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By Jesse Sawerr